

Application Serial No. 10/688,872

Attorney Docket No. D0000-1005d1

REMARKS/ARGUMENTSClaim Status

Claims 1, 3-5, 7-10, and 13-18 are pending in this application. Claims 16-18 are allowed. Claims 1, 3-5, 7-8, 10, and 13-15 stand rejected. Claim 9 stands objected to.

Claims 1, 7, and 10 have been amended. No claims have been added or canceled.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1 and 3 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Tso-Chin et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 6,210,216) in view of Okamoto (U.S. Pat. No. 6,752,662). Applicant traverses this rejection in light of the amendments made herein to claim 1.

For example, claim 1 has been amended to clarify that the cavity of each connector is defined by an outer shell comprising a surface integrally formed in one piece with the housing. Tso-Chin does not disclose this limitation of claim 1, as amended. Element 22 in FIG. 2 of Tso-Chin, for example, is not integrally formed in one piece with the housing 18, 20. Claim 1, as amended, therefore patentably distinguishes over Tso-Chin. Applicant therefore traverses the rejection of claim 1 and requests that it be

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withdrawn. Claim 3 depends from claim 1 and therefore patentably distinguishes over Tso-Chin for at least the same reason.

Claims 4-5, 7-8, 10-11, and 13-15 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Tso-Chin in view of Okamoto and Tan et al. (U.S. Pat. NO. 6,475,021). All of these claims now incorporate, either directly or indirectly, the limitations described above with respect to claim 1. None of the cited references, either individually or in combination, teaches or suggests these limitations of claim 1. Claims 4-5, 7-8, 10-11, and 13-15 therefore patentably distinguish over the cited combination for at least the reasons provided above with respect to claim 1.

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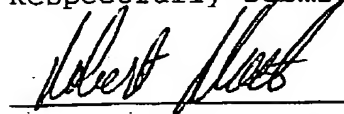
CONCLUSIONS

Any dependent claims not specifically discussed above depend, either directly or indirectly, from the independent claims discussed above and therefore are patentable for at least the same reason(s).

If the Examiner wishes to discuss this Response, the Examiner is requested to call the Applicant's attorney at the phone number listed below.

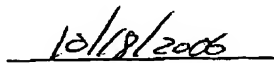
If this response is not considered timely filed and if a request for extension of time is otherwise absent, applicant hereby requests any extension of time. Please charge any fees or make any credits, to Deposit Account No. 50/1797.

Respectfully submitted,



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Date

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